

Relaxing foods



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GREAT FALLS TRIBUNE

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Wednesday, May 22, 2013



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Montana's newspaper

"It is a celebration of legislation that has passed, but it's also a celebration that's rooted in many tragedies." — **GOV. STEVE BULLOCK**



Gov. Steve Bullock signs Senate Bill 160 into law Tuesday morning at the Cascade County Courthouse. Cascade County Attorney John Parker, left, and the bill's sponsor, Sen. Mitch Tropila, right, look on. TRIBUNE PHOTOGRAPHER SANDERS

OCTOBER PEREZ BILL BECOMES LAW

Measures intended to curb child abuse

By Michael Beel
Tribune Staff Writer

Gov. Steve Bullock signed two child abuse protection bills inside the Cascade County Courthouse on Tuesday, adjacent to an ongoing jury trial of an alleged sexual assault of a 4-year-old girl.

The two bills were Senate Bill 160 and House Bill 76. SB 160 was sponsored by Sen. Mitch Tropila, D-Great Falls, which created the offense of felony criminal child endangerment. HB 76, known as the October Perez bill, created an ombudsman for the Montana Department of Justice.

"It is a celebration of legislation that has passed, but it's also a celebration that's rooted in many tragedies," Bullock said.

The tragedies Bullock alluded to were the deaths of five children in

INSIDE

Bullock signs education funding bill /3A

Cascade County over the past five years, and in the wake of the deaths, five child abuse prevention bills were introduced to the 2013 Montana Legislature, and four passed.

Tropila carried SB 160 through the Legislature, but he said the passage of the package of child protection bills was a team effort from law enforcement and county attorneys to social and community service groups.

The crux of the package of bills is that, "In Montana, if you hurt a child, you will be punished," Tropila said.

Tuesday's ceremony symbolized that after the tragedies in Great Falls, the state of Montana said enough is enough, Tropila said.

Cascade County Attorney John Parker drafted SB 160 and traveled to Helena throughout the legislative session to testify for the package of bills, and he opened his short speech to the courtroom by thanking Bullock.

"I think it sends a powerful message that the plans we've been making and the work we're doing is taking hold, and we're going to turn the tide, and he came here personally to make sure that's going to be the case," Parker said.

Parker's voice cracked with emotion as he spoke about going forward and how the bills will be used.

"Here's the bottom line. Montana's children have more protection under the law than they did before," he said. "I will tell you we are going to use these laws to make sure

See ABUSE LAW, 3A

GREAT FALLS COMMISSION MEETING

City discusses budget, park

Officials seek ways to pay \$3.25 million ECP settlement

By Jenn Rowell
Tribune Staff Writer

The city of Great Falls is continuing to look for available funding to pay the \$3.25 million settlement related to Electric City Power over the next six months.

Where it will come from is still under consideration.

The City Commission voted Tuesday night to set a public hearing for June 4 to bud-

get amendments that needed to come up. ECP settlement funding amendment includes transferring funds from existing city funds to Doyon, city manager's office. City manager's office staff will be best absorb the losses reported in the Great Falls Tribune on Monday.

Those funds are: wages; information technology; fiscal services; engineering; public works administration; insurance; safety; hazard removal; economic revolving funds pulled from the equal the first payment of \$2.5 million about two weeks after

See COMMISSION

House measure honors WWII special forces

'The Devil's Brigade' would be awarded congressional medal

By Katie Hulon Herman
Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The House passed a bill Tuesday that would award the congressional gold medal to the First Special Service Force, an elite strike force that started in Montana during World War II.

"The bravery and valor of the Army special forces — more commonly known as the Green Berets — are well known to most Americans. But many don't realize that this unit was born out of the First Special Service Force and the courageous soldiers who fought for it during World War II," Rep. Tom Cotton of Arkansas told his colleagues on the House floor in introducing the bill for consideration.

Cotton, a Republican, said the congressional gold medal would both recognize the men who served for their "heroic service" and also "ensure that this unit attains the



"I am proud that the Special Service Force, which started at Fort Harrison, Montana, is being recognized for the impact that it has on our military nation."

STEVE DAINES
Montana's U.S. representative

historic recognition that serves."

Only a couple hundred men remain of the 3,000 who made up the joint American-Canadian command created in 1942 to take on the most dangerous military missions. The unit, mentioned in the 1968 movie "The

See FORCES, 3A

"In Montana, if you hurt a child, you will be punished." — **STATE SEN. MITCH TROPILA**

Abuse law

Continued from 1A

are safe in this community and all across the state of Montana."

Bullock said his visit to Great Falls was more than symbolism, and his signature on the two bills showed how the legislative process works when people come together and work toward an end and to make a meaningful difference.

The court proceedings next to the room where Bullock spoke is recognition of the continuing challenges the justice system will face, Bullock said.

"We need to be vigilant to keep kids safe," he said. "As attorney general, I worked a lot on child advocacy centers, making sure a child who is a victim or potential victim is on a path toward healing."

The Cascade County CARE Center is one of the advocacy centers Bullock mentioned, and it's the center where Great Falls Police Detective Noah Scott conducted his forensic interview of a 4-year-old girl in March 2012. That interview led to the trial he testified in Tuesday morning.

Scott said Tuesday's bill signing is huge for children in Montana, and that he's most optimistic about SB 160.

"Hopefully on even one case we can proactively stop a child from getting into a situation like an October Perez," Scott said. "If we can get one it will be a resounding success. It will lead us to have more tools in the toolbox so to speak to help chil-

dren in difficult situations."

Scott said getting a case into prosecution is a difficult process, and for every child abuse case the public reads in the paper, there are 20 that never get to that point.

Amid the crowd inside the courtroom were a half dozen people wearing white T-shirts with October Perez's name and picture. Tuesday was an emotional day for October's family, but it was also a chance to start anew.

"It has been a very long road," said April Hall, October's grandmother and major proponent for the October Perez bill. "It's been a fight day and night, and the last few months was a roller coaster ride."

The fight for Hall, as well as October's father, who returned from deployment in Afghanistan, her aunt and close friends, began six months before October's death, trying to save her life, Hall said. But the true fight followed her death in order to get an ombudsman for child abuse cases in the Department of Justice.

Tropila personally thanked October's family wearing matching shirts, as he walked from the courtroom, telling them they helped make the child protection package pass.

He said hope for our children starts today.

"Ultimately it really is all about the kids," Tropila said. "It was a team effort. The sun is shining today, and hopefully it's shining bright for our children."

Reach Tribune Staff Writer Michael Beall at 791-6527 or at mbeall@greatfallstribune.com.

Bullock signs education funding bill

By Kristeen Cates
Tribune Staff Writer

Gov. Steve Bullock ceremonially signed into law Tuesday what has been touted as one of the best education funding bills in recent memory in Montana.

The ceremony happened at Conrad High School on Tuesday, the home of Senate Bill 175's primary sponsor, Republican state Sen. Llew Jones.

SB 175 will put an additional \$50 million into state education funding over the next biennium, but will do so through a combination of increasing the amount of oil and gas revenue while also decreasing the amount of property taxes used to fund the state's portion of K-12 education spending.

School districts with budgets higher than the state's contribution, such as Great Falls Public Schools, will still have to ask voters to approve a levy or make cuts.

Other components of Jones' bill call for a K-12 data achievement payment to schools and the creation of a K-12 data task force to make data measurement and comprehension more user-friendly and readily available for classroom use.

The bill also provided some flexibility in the amount of money schools receive based on inflated enrollment. That portion of the bill was designed for communities seeing a large increase in student population due to oil development in nearby communities.

Though the bill was sponsored by Jones, it received wide bipartisan support in the Legislature and was also endorsed by organizations such as MEA-MPT, Montana School Boards Association, School Administrators of Montana and the Montana Rural Education Association.

Forces

Continued from 1A

Brigade," trained at Fort Harrison near Helena.

The bill, which passed the House on a unanimous 415-0 vote, would provide for two gold medals to be awarded on behalf of the men who served. One would go to the Smithsonian Institution to be displayed; the other would go to the First Special Services Force Association, based in

Helena.

Democratic Sen. Max Baucus of Montana has made it his mission to get the bill passed before he retires from Congress next year.

"Without these brave volunteers, there would be no Special Forces today," Baucus said. "I can't think of anyone more deserving of Congress' highest honor."

Baucus' bill in the Senate has 30 supporters, including Democratic Sen. Jon Tester of Montana. The bill needs the support of 67 senators be-

fore it can be voted on by the full Senate.

"The Devil's Brigade represented the very best of our greatest generation that defeated tyranny around the world," Tester said. "The congressional gold medal is a small token of this nation's gratitude, but an ever-lasting reminder of the sacrifices these men made for all of us."

Republican Rep. Steve Daines of Montana voted for the bill in the House; he also is a co-sponsor of the measure.

"Montana has a strong legacy of military service, which is truly exemplified by the First Special Service Force and its important place in our state's history," Daines said. "I am proud that the First Special Service Force, which got its start at Fort Harrison in Montana, is being recognized for the lasting impact that it has had on our military and our nation."

Contact Malia Rulon Herman at mruilon@gannett.com or @mruilon on Twitter.

Commission

Continued from 1A

nal court order is issued in the ECP settlement.

Doyon said the city is cutting back on unnecessary travel, and collective bargaining agreements are being looked at this year. Vacant positions will not be filled, including that of the historic preservation officer.

"It's not my intent to get rid of the historic commission," Doyon said. He added that the work will be picked up by existing staff for the time being, and he's hoping to avoid furloughs and layoffs.

Though the city has to pay the settlement, the shifting of monies leaves the general fund, specifically the undesignated fund balance, very low.

The current proposal is that fund at less than a month's operating expenses, Doyon said.

The commission also voted to authorize Doyon to enter an agreement with Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority for employee health care benefits.

Things got a bit heated during the public comment period.

Alma Winberry said the commission had lost touch with the people and was holding the city hostage. She mentioned bike paths and chickens that were supported by a majority of the population, but the commission voted against them.

Mayor Michael Winters said he resented her comments, and Commissioner Bob Jones said that bike paths were part of the larger complete streets concept and that enhancements had been made to bicycle access.

He said to paint bicycle markings would cost \$400 per block on one side of the road and require continual maintenance.

"The burden to the public

would be astronomical," he said. "I'd love to go into chickens, but I'm not going to."

Commissioner Fred Burrow jumped in with a story of a woman who supported chickens in the city previously, but was less inclined after dealing with a stray chicken.

"I think if it would have been voted down a good death," Burrow said. "I'm not glad to see it come back."

Commissioner Bob Kelly said he knows people are frustrated but should "answer with your vote."

He challenged the public to put up viable candidates who may have different views.

The potential sale of city parkland was a contentious issue.

The idea of selling undeveloped parkland that was deemed surplus property by a 1995 parks master plan has been floated in several re-

cent meetings, including neighborhood council meetings. Any funds from those sales would go to the park trust and further development of parks and cannot be used to pay the ECP settlement.

"The city's not selling any parks to pay ECP debt," Winters said.

Kathleen Gessamen said there was discussion of a possible parkland sale during a neighborhood council meeting last week. A local church has expressed interest in purchasing the property, and Great Falls Public Schools has agreed to pair their adjacent parcel in the sale should it happen.

Gessamen said if a church bought it, that might be OK.

Ron Gessamen added that no one in the neighborhood proposed the parkland sale, but it was on the agenda last week. Clara Park is on the agenda for another neighborhood council this week.

Tornado

Continued from 1A

displaced. Emergency crews had trouble navigating devastated neighborhoods because there were no street signs left. Some rescuers used smartphones or GPS devices to guide them through areas with no recognizable landmarks.

The death toll was revised downward from 51 after the state medical examiner said some victims may have been counted twice in the confusion.

By Tuesday afternoon, every damaged home had been searched at least once, Bird said. His goal was to conduct three searches of each building just to be certain there were no more bodies or survivors.

The fire chief was hopeful that could be completed before nightfall, but the work was being hampered by heavy rain. Crews also continued a brick-by-brick search of the rubble of a school that was blown apart with many children inside.

No additional survivors or bodies have been found since Monday night, Bird said.

Survivors emerged with harrowing accounts of the storm's wrath, which many endured as they shielded loved ones.

Chelsie McCumber grabbed her 2-year-old son, Ethan, wrapped him in jackets and covered him with a mattress before they squeezed into a coat closet of their house. McCumber sang to her child when he complained it was getting hot inside the small space.

"I told him we're going to play tent in the closet," she said, beginning to cry.

"I just felt air so I knew the roof was gone," she said Tuesday, standing under the sky where her roof should have been. The home was littered with wet gray insulation and all of their belongings.

"Time just kind of stood still" in the closet, she recalled. "I was kind of holding my breath thinking this isn't the worst of it. I didn't think that was it. I kept waiting for it to get worse."

"When I got out, it was worse than I thought," she said.

Gov. Mary Fallin lamented the loss of life, especially the children who were

killed, but she the town's resili-

"We will rebu-

will regain our Fallin said.

In describing eye view, the go many houses w-

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Child & Family Services Division

Statistical Data for Statewide, Lewis & Clark and Broadwater Counties for calendar year 2016

Requested by Pam Young, Director of Advocacy L&C and Broadwater Counties CASA

Period from January 1, 2017 through October 31, 2017 and point in time of January 10, 2017 for drug data

Source: RDS 5388.1 and 5388.2 Drug Data and MTROM for Caseload flow and Maltreatment Allegations Data Capture: November 20, 2017

Author: Joanne Oreskovich, PhD

MTROM Caseload Flow for Children in Care (Non-Tribal) for Partial Calendar Year 2017:

	Lewis & Clark County		Broadwater County		Statewide	
Report Period	Jan-Oct 2017		Jan-Oct 2017		Jan-Oct 2017	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
In placement at start of period	187	63.8	8	53.3	2,641	54.0
Trial Home Visit at start of period	15	5.1	0	0.0	342	7.0
Total Starting Caseload*	202	68.9	8	53.3	2,983	61.0
115 end of December Total Entered Care during time period	91	31.1	1	6.7	1,908	39.0
317 end of December Total Caseload during time period	293	100.0	15	100.0	4,891	100.0
Total Exited Care during time period	101	34.5	7	46.7	1,385	28.3
216 end of December Caseload at end of period	192	65.5	8	53.3	3,506	71.7

* In care first day of the Report Period who were also in care the day before.

Count of maltreatment allegations by maltreatment type (Non-Tribal) from MTROM for Jan-Oct 2017 Calendar Year:

Jan-Oct 2017	Lewis & Clark County	Broadwater County	Statewide
Type of Allegation	Count†	Count†	Count†
Physical Abuse	31	0	397
Physical Neglect	1,198	69	15,261
Psychological/Emotional Maltreatment	23	1	260
Sexual Abuse	32	5	317
Medical Neglect	24	4	236
Other	1	0	6
Total Allegations	1,309	79	16,477
Total Substantiated Allegations	173	13	2,880
Total Unsubstantiated/Pending Allegations	1,136	66	13,597

† One report could have multiple children and/or allegations so numbers will not add to 100%.

This below, I will have confirmed over the weekend. Now that we have all the 2017 cases

Open placements (Non-Tribal) involving drug use as a reason for removal on **1/13/2017**

Drug Report Montana Children and Family Services	Lewis & Clark County	Broadwater County	Statewide
TOTAL NUMBER OF OPEN PLACEMENTS:	200	8	3,518
PLACEMENTS WITH DRUG INDICATOR OF N:	108	NA	1,187
116 end of Dec PLACEMENTS WITH DRUG INDICATOR OF Y:	92	NA	2,331
TOTAL PERCENT OF CASES INVOLVING ALL DRUGS:	46.00%	NA	66.20%
DRUG CODES	Count	Count	Count
84 end of December METHAMPHETAMINE	61	NA	1,585
7 end of December ALCOHOL	6	NA	342
MARIJUANA	5	NA	379
COCAINE	0	NA	23
HEROIN	1	NA	44
PRESCRIPTION DRUGS	4	NA	241
ECSTASY	0	NA	4
INHALANTS	0	NA	3
UNKNOWN	5	NA	180
106 end of December TOTAL DRUGS	82	NA	2,801

† Percentages do not necessarily add to 100% as more than one drug may be recorded per report.

Tuesday, 1/18/18

12 children involved in state CPS died in '17

HOLLY K. MICHELS
holly.michels@lee.net

During the past year, 12 children who had been the subject of reports of abuse or neglect to the state's child protective services died, according to a report released Wednesday.

Fourteen deaths were reported as required by state law, but of those, 12 involved a report made to the state's child protective services before the death.

Of those 14 child deaths, five were homicides and four were ruled accidental, including three that involved an infant sleeping with the mother and drug use by the mother.

Two deaths were due to medical complications for the child. In both cases, there was drug use by the mother that may have contributed to the child's death.

One death was a suicide. The cause of the other two children's deaths were unknown or still under investigation.

Of the 14 deaths, 10 were children ages 1 or younger. Two children who died were ages 1-3 and two were ages 4-17. Eight were girls, six were boys. Nine were white, four were American Indian and one was black.

The report found six criminal charges resulting from the 14 fatalities.

A report last year, the first done

Please see **CHILD DEATHS**, Page A7

Child deaths

From A1

in Montana, also found that 14 children died during a 16-month period from July 1, 2015, to Nov. 8, 2016, after the state had been told that those children were being abused or neglected.

This year's report covers from Dec. 16, 2016, to Dec. 15, 2017.

The new report has more information about the child deaths, including the cause of death, ages of children and other details about their situations. But the Child Fatality Review Team team that authored it is looking for more information, which it hopes will come from a new Child Abuse and Neglect Commission created during the 2017 Legislature.

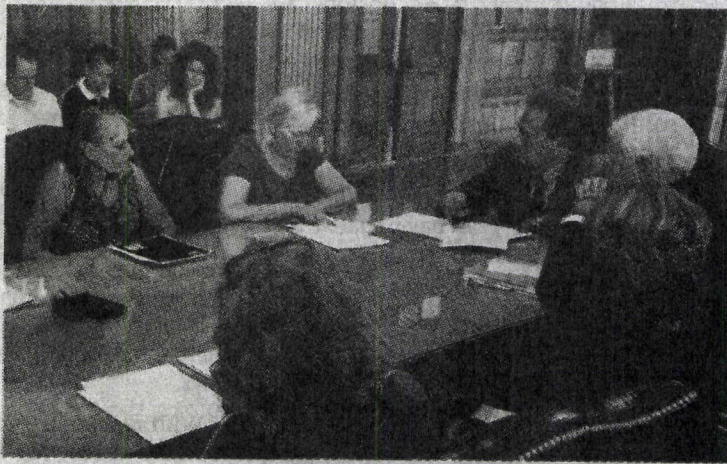
On Wednesday, Dana Toole, chief of the Children's Justice Bureau of the Department of Justice, said the new commission should be able to help fill in the gaps. The commission, which is under the state health department, has until August 2018 to develop a plan to reduce child abuse and neglect over a five-year period.

"We are really looking forward to having the statewide commission convene and develop their parameters about which fatalities they are going to review because they will have access to information from all the parties and stakeholders involved in child fatalities so they will be able to do a much more comprehensive process than we can," Toole said.

The Child Fatality Review Team does not have the ability to request law enforcement or other records, and relies on what it gets from the Child and Family Services Division of the state Department of Public Health and Human Services.

But the new commission, which holds its first meeting in February, will be able to request and gather more information. Toole said she didn't fault the Child and Family Services Division, which she said often requested information such as autopsy reports, but they were not provided by local law enforcement.

Last week the Department of Public Health and Human Services announced a new initiative to reduce child fatalities that includes dedicated in-home visits and targeted help for children and families deemed high-risk. The program will be implemented in five regions



AP PHOTO

In this 2015 file photo, April Hall, seated at left, whose granddaughter was killed by the mother's boyfriend in June 2011, and Robin Castle, second from left, a licensed clinical professional counselor, during a meeting with Gov. Steve Bullock, seated third from left, to demand improvements in the state Division of Child and Family Services, in Helena. A review of 14 child deaths in Montana from July 2015 to November 2016 concluded that most died of abuse or neglect, with several common factors that should have raised red flags with child protection workers.

of the state in coming months and other components will be rolled out later in the year.

Health department director Sheila Hogan said Tuesday the department is working to reduce child deaths.

"We will be closely reviewing the report and look forward to discussing the recommendations with the Child and Family Ombudsman," Hogan said. "We are currently engaged in full-throttle work to improve the system and outcomes for families, including the First Years Initiative, our critical incident review process, the Abuse and Neglect Review Commission, and targeted community collaborations for mothers and infants impacted by drug use."

In recommendations made at the end of this year's fatality report, the review panel called on the state to recognize the lack of treatment and safety options for pregnant and new mothers battling drug addiction.

The panel said the state should pursue legislative action to create and fund evidence-based programs to treat and support mothers and children. It also called on the health department to increase referrals and follow up with mothers who have been reported to child protective services as needing or receiving treatment while pregnant or within a year of giving birth.

The review found that the state health department should review

its safety assessment protocols and require drug testing information in every case where drug use is an allegation, with a priority for testing when children are under the age of 5 and developmentally unable to be forensically interviewed.

Indicators of risk in child fatalities included prior history with child protective services, prior criminal history, alcohol or drug abuse, methamphetamine use, domestic violence and housing instability or other financial insecurities.

In nine of the cases, drug or alcohol use was identified. Of those nine, three included methamphetamine use. In five cases there was domestic violence in the child's home and 10 cases had multiple risk factors.

The review board also examined whether parents had a criminal history.

In six cases the alleged perpetrator of abuse or neglect had a criminal history. In six cases any criminal history was unknown. In one case the alleged perpetrator was a partner to the child's mother.

In 12 of the cases, there had been prior reports to child protective services about a child or children in the home. In six of the cases, there was an open report at the time of the death. The review also found that in six of the cases, the child's parent had been involved in child protective services when they were a child.

Ten of the children who died had

surviving siblings, and in four of those cases siblings were removed from their parents' home following the fatality. None of the deaths occurred when the child was in out-of-home care.

The review found that in some of the deaths, child protective service workers did not meet deadlines or reporting requirements for handling a report of abuse or neglect made to a central intake center.

In three cases, the assessment of the child done by child protective services workers was missing all or part of the required supervisory review. Another three cases were past the 60-day requirement for an assessment closure.

In eight cases that required a family functioning assessment, the review found those assessments were incomplete. The assessment is used by case workers to ascertain how a family functions and what safety issues might exist, and is meant to provide an overall insight into a situation, not just a single case of abuse.

Toole said that child protective workers have good tools in place, but that use of the tools is inconsistent and documentation can be spotty.

"It's just inconsistent to start with," Toole said. "And with turnover rates (of caseworkers) as high as 50 percent, every time they get a new worker they have to train them on using that family functioning assessment and there's a learning curve."

Since 2015, the state has been required to track the fatalities of children who have been involved with the Child and Family Services Division of the state Department of Public Health and Human Services.

Child fatalities must be reported by the Child and Family Services Division within a business day of the death for any child who has been the subject of a report or investigation into abuse or neglect, was in out-of-home care at the time of the death or had received services as part of a voluntary protective services agreement.

The fatality review team, which is under the Department of Justice, includes Dana Toole, Children's Justice Bureau chief; Traci Shina-barger, chief child and family ombudsman; Gala Goodwin, deputy child and family ombudsman; and Matthew Dale, executive director of the Office of Consumer Protection & Victim Services.